

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 04397 011353Z
ACTION AF-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PIN, PINS, SHUM, SF
SUBJECT: PAC TERRORISM TRIAL

REF: PRETORIA 3785 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY: STATE WITNESSES, WHICH MAY NUMBER 150, CONTINUE TO PRESENT HARD EVIDENCE AGAINST THE 18 PAC ACCUSED IN BETHAL. THE RELATIVELY EXTENSIVE PRESS REPORTS OF TESTIMONY TO DATE HAVE EMPHASIZED A SECURITY DANGER TO THE SAG. END SUMMARY.

2. THE "IN CAMERA" TERRORISM ACT TRIAL OF 18 ALLEGED PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS (PAC) MEMBERS WHO PLEADED NOT GUILTY TO CHARGES OF CONSPIRING TO OVERTHROW THE SAG, RECRUITING SOUTH AFRICANS FOR MILITARY TRAINING ABROAD, AND OTHERWISE FURTHERING THE AIMS OF THE BANNED PAC, RESUMED IN BETHAL ON JULY 24. STATE CONTINUES TO CALL FORTH A STREAM OF WITNESSES WHOSE INDIVIDUAL TESTIMONY HAS TAKEN FROM TEN MINUTES TO THREE HOURS. DEFENSE ATTORNEY HARRY PITMAN INFORMED EMBOFF ON AUGUST 1

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PAGE 02 PRETOR 04397 011353Z

THAT THE STATE MAY NOOW INTEND ON PRESENTING TOTAL OF 150 WITNESSES BEFORE RESTING ITS CASE AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER.

3. THE SUBSTANCE OF RECENT TESTIMONY OF TWO WITNESSES APPEARS TO BE TYPICAL OF PRIOR TESTIMONY HEARD FROM THE SEVENTY-ODD STATE WITNESSES TO DATE. ON JULY 24, WITNESS X TOLD THE COURT THAT TWO OF THE ACCUSED WERE PRESENT AT A JUNE, 1976, MEETING

IN PRETORIA AT WHICH A REPORT FROM PAC HEADQUARTERS IN TANZANIA WAS READ AND DISCUSSED. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, X SAID THAT THE PAC HAD OFFICIALLY ADOPTED A MARXIST-LENINIST LINE AND THE GROUP WAS URGED TO REVIVE THE PAC PLUS RECRUIT PEOPLE FOR MILITARY TRAINING. X ALSO SAID ONE OF THE ACCUSED CAUTIONED THE OTHERS TO OPERATE IN SMALL GROUPS IN ORDER TO AVOID THE MISTAKES OF THE 1960'S WHEN THEY ACTED IN LARGE NUMBERS AND WERE ARRESTED.

4. WITNESS Y, A FORMER STUDENT IN CAPE TOWN, TOLD THE COURT THAT THREE OF THE ACCUSED HELPED HIM AND SIX OTHERS LEAVE SOUTH AFRICA IN 1976 FOR MILITARY TRAINING. Y ALLEGEDLY TESTIFIED THAT HE SLIPPED INTO SWAZILAND NEAR THE OSHOEK BORDER POST AND SPENT THREE IDLE MONTHS IN THE SWAZI LUYENGO PRISON CAMP BEFORE BECOMING DISILLUSIONED WITH THE PAC AND RETURNING TO SOUTH AFRICA.

5. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, PITMAN CONCEDED THAT "THE CASE AGAINST US IS A STRONG ONE" AND OPINED THE TRIAL WILL TERMINATE BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR. PITMAN DID NOT APPEAR OPTIMISTIC AS TO THE OUTCOME.

6. COMMENT: SAG APPEARS TO HAVE DONE ITS HOMEWORK IN GATHERING HARD EVIDENCE AGAINST PAC ACCUSED. RELATIVELY EXTENSIVE PRESS COVERAGE OF STATE WITNESSES' TESTIMONY HAS PLACED THE ACCENT ON MARXIST IDEOLOGY, COMMUNIST BACKING, A POTENTIAL MILITARY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 PRETOR 04397 011353Z

THREAT, AND AN EVERPRESENT SECURITY DANGER FACING SOUTH AFRICA. THESE PRESS REPORTS SERVE A DUAL PURPOSE FOR THE SAG IN THAT, AS FAR AS THE ELECTORATE IS CONCERNED, THEY APPEAR TO LEGITIMIZE THE MYRIAD OF INTERNAL SECURITY LAWS ALREADY ON THE BOOKS AND AT THE SAME TIME REMIND THE WHITE PUBLIC THAT SAG FACES AN "ONSLAUGHT" FROM FOREIGN SOURCES. EDMONDSON

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